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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8590  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 000022

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [QA](#)  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN MID-2010?

REF: A. 2008 DOHA 475  
[1](#)B. 2008 DOHA 368

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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(C) KEY POINTS  
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-- Elections for the National Advisory Council may be held "as early as mid-2010," according to Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rahman Majid al-Sulaiti, Assistant Director of Elections at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), in comments reported by the press January 12.

-- Elections were previously scheduled for late 2008, but were postponed in July by the Amir.

-- Al-Sulaiti said that the draft law on the new elections faces several more reviews before it will be finalized. He noted the target date was a possibility, not a certainty.

-- Dr. Muhammad Fouad, Legal Director at the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), told Poloff Caudill January 12 that the NHRC is supposed to have input on the draft law. He believes it will be finalized and presented to the Amir in late 2009 and is optimistic about the prospects for elections in mid-2010.

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(C) COMMENTS  
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-- The target date for the these elections has now slipped several times over the past three years. Clearly, the Amir is in no hurry to establish even a partially-elected parliament.

-- Reforms are top down here, and the ruling Al Thani family is conflicted over the process of democratization and its potential impact on the course they have charted for Qatar. For them, Kuwait's elected parliament is a cautionary tale.

-- We doubt that even the new target date for elections will hold, especially since there appears to be no strong drive in the Qatari community for a parliament.

End Key Points and Comments.

[1](#)1. (U) According to the January 12 English-language daily Gulf Times, Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rahman Majid al-Sulaiti, Assistant Director of Elections at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), has announced that elections for the Advisory Council may be held "as early as mid-2010." Elections were previously scheduled for late 2008, but were postponed by the Amir in July. Al-Sulaiti blamed the postponement on mid-year Cabinet changes (see Ref A).

[1](#)2. (U) Al Sulaiti said the draft law on the new elections was still being prepared and faces a lengthy review process

before being ready for the Amir's consideration. Among the issues to be resolved are the qualifications of candidates and eligible voters (Note: In the municipal elections held in April 2007, all Qatari citizens aged 18 years or older were eligible to vote; all citizens aged 21 or older were eligible to run for office. See Ref B. End Note.)

13. (C) Dr. Muhammad Fouad, Legal Director at the NHRC, told Poloff Caudill January 12 that the Committee had been informed that it would have the opportunity to provide input on the draft law before it goes to the Amir for his approval.

He stated that the GOQ has set late 2009 as the target date for finalizing this process, with elections to be held in mid-2010. Fouad is optimistic about the possibility that the current timetable will hold, citing the senior Qatari leadership's commitment to the elections process.

LeBaron